

Year One Bond Highlights

Polk County Water & Land Legacy (PCWLL)

- More than 580 acres of land has been acquired with PCWLL funding: the Camp Creek Corridor between Runnells and Mitchellville, the Beaver Creek Greenbelt Woodland in northeast Polk County, three properties in the Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt, and a property adjacent to Yellow Banks Park. These acquisitions will enable us to provide buffer areas adjacent to the parks, protect natural areas, enhance water quality, and support planned park improvements.
- The Highway 65 Wildlife Overlook at Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt is now complete with spotting scopes for viewing wildlife and a footpath leading from a newly constructed parking lot. This land was acquired with PCWLL funding. A kiosk and interpretive information will follow. *A Master Plan Open House for Chichaqua Bottoms Greenbelt was held at the end of October where the future of this park was discussed.*
- The water levels in the pond at Fort Des Moines Park have been drawn down in order to begin pond restoration. Soon, installation of stabilization structures and the beginnings of wetland construction will occur. This will lead to improved water quality, fisheries health, and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- A new trailhead parking lot at Brown's Woods for both vehicular and bus parking has now been constructed. This will provide safe access for children using the area for educational purposes. Work has begun to expand the nature trails; this expansion will provide access to an under-used portion of the park and will include interpretive information.
- The four modern cabins at Jester Park are nearing completion. These cabins will provide opportunities for families to enjoy Jester Park who are unable or less inclined to camp. Reservations will be available beginning Memorial Day weekend. Just across the road is the recently-restored Two Dam Pond where a .3 mile accessible trail around the pond has been completed, linking up to a new fishing pier and canoe/kayak launch. We anticipate a Grand Opening to be held in the spring for the cabins and Two Dam Pond area.
- The Ankeny to Des Moines Connection of the Gay Lea Wilson Trail has been completed. Polk County Conservation constructed and paved a 2.5 mile segment of trail between 29th Avenue and Aurora Avenue adjacent to Four Mile Creek. This Trail is classified as a priority one (statewide significant) trail within the comprehensive multi-agency Central Iowa Trail Plan.
 - Two lengths of creek along the Four Mile Greenbelt were also stabilized as part of this project. This was necessary for trail construction to be secure.
- Phase I of the Mark C. Ackelson Trail at Easter Lake Park has been completed. This phase encompasses about 1.75 miles of paved trail on the south side of the lake from Shelter #4 to Easter Lake Drive. This section of trail will provide for safe trail use off the park road and includes enhancements of the existing historic covered bridge. It also provides improved access to adjacent neighborhoods. *Staff has also been working feverishly in conjunction with project partners to further planning and engineering associated with the Easter Lake Watershed Management Plan. This large-scale lake restoration project should begin in 2014.*
- Site preparation is taking place for the Jester Park Conservation Center now that plans and designs have been finalized. The Center's upper level will be home to Polk County Conservation headquarters where the public can

have immediate access to staff, resources, and interpretive areas. The lower level will serve as an educational staging area for science, arts, history, and a gateway to the great outdoors. Public rental space and a safe room will provide a secure environment for all users.

- A natural hiking trail around the pond at Thomas Mitchell Park has been completed. Work has begun to improve the Camp Creek crossing; there will be a reduction of the steep grade for crossing vehicles and a recreational access point to the creek provided for visitors.
- The water level in the pond at Yellow Banks Park will be lowered to allow for work to begin on the dam. The outlet and overflow structures will be replaced, and the top of the dam will be lowered eight feet so that park users can gain improved access to the water. This work will begin yet this fall.